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CURRENT LITERATURE

BOOK REVIEWS

Diseases of economic plants

The appearance of a revised edition of STEVENS and HALL's *Diseases of economic plants*¹ will be welcomed by every one interested in plant pathology. Since the publication of the first edition in 1910, so much progress has been made in the rapidly expanding field of plant pathology that a revised edition of this work will be appreciated, especially by the busy teacher and investigator.

The general plan of the book is similar to that of the first edition, although some changes have been made. The first fourteen pages are devoted to a brief summary of the history of plant pathology, the damage caused by plant diseases, and methods of prevention or cure. General diseases, such as damping off, root rot, and soil diseases, are discussed in a special section of the book. The diseases of special crops are grouped under the crop plants upon which they occur, and a chapter on tropical diseases has been added. This is followed by a chapter on fungicides and spraying apparatus, and another on soil disinfection. The bibliography contains 556 well chosen titles. Since the book is intended primarily as a text for college students, according to the author, many students, and certainly many teachers, will wish that the historical summary were more detailed. One might wish also that the damage caused by plant diseases had been discussed more fully. An account of the most serious epidemics probably would have been especially appreciated. The methods of disease prevention are grouped on the basis of more or less specific operations, such as seed treatment, the use of protective sprays and dusts, the selection of resistant varieties, and avoidance of practices which aid in the dissemination of the parasite. A brief account of quarantines possibly might have been desirable; and a more general grouping of control measures probably would seem preferable to some pathologists. The discussion of specific diseases is limited to essential facts. The economic importance, signs, general etiology, and control measures are given for all important diseases. The presentation is as detailed as could be expected in a book of such wide scope, and the literature citations direct the student to sources from which further information may be obtained.

The book is an excellent compendium of practical facts regarding plant diseases, and should be especially valuable as a reference. It is concisely written, well illustrated, and contains an extensive bibliography. It is to be hoped that the book will find its way into the hands not only of students, teachers, and investigators, but also of farm bureau advisers and the more

¹ STEVENS, F. L., and HALL, J. G., *Diseases of economic plants* (revised edition by F. L. STEVENS). pp. 507. Macmillan Co. 1921.

intelligent growers. STEVENS has rendered a distinct service to phytopathology by summarizing in a compact, neatly bound volume such a vast body of knowledge in an increasingly important field of applied botany.—E. C. STAKMAN.

A textbook of botany

Under the title *General Botany*, DENSMORE² has added to the already numerous textbooks of elementary botany whose scope and content are suitable for use in the junior college or normal school. The headings of the first two and of the last chapter in the book, The relations of plants to the environment, The form and adjustments of the plant body to the environment, and Plant associations, show that ecology has been given due emphasis. The intervening chapters are devoted to plant anatomy, physiology, and morphology in a way that seems to fit the title of the book. There is even an attempt at the beginnings of classification, with the consideration of representative species and families from the spring flora. In a word, the material is sufficiently comprehensive that in the hands of a good teacher it will furnish the basis of a good general introductory course in the subject.

There is evidence in the volume that it comes as a result of a wide experience in the laboratory and in the field. The illustrations are numerous, many are original, and several, such as those of diagrammatic life histories, are of more than usual merit. The addition of a glossary would have supplemented the usefulness of the volume.—GEO. D. FULLER

West African forests

A volume entitled "West African forests and forestry," by UNWIN,³ late conservator of forests, Nigeria, is principally concerned with the economics of the forests of the west coast of Africa from the Senegal to the Congo River. It includes the regulations restricting the cutting of timber, the efforts at reforestation, notes on the most valuable timber trees, and summaries of forest exports. There are also chapters on The oil bean seeds and nuts of the forest; The oil palm and palm kernel industry; The forest in relation to agriculture; and A bibliography of West African forests. Considerable space is also devoted to the native names for the various trees.

The abundance and excellence of the photographs, together with the notes on the general forest conditions, furnish the ecologist and geographer with considerable data regarding the forest formation in a relatively unknown region. The index seems to be adequate and able to add to the usefulness of the volume, but the bibliography leaves much to be desired in the way of accuracy and completeness of citations.—GEO. D. FULLER.

² DENSMORE, H. D., *General botany*. 12mo. pp. xii+459. *figs.* 289. Ginn and Co., Boston. 1920. \$2.96.

³ UNWIN, A. H., *West African forests and forestry*. 8mo. pp. 527. *figs.* 110. London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd. 1920.